

This resource has been developed by the staff of New Life Bible Camp to give you, the parents, insight into what your camper has studied at camp this summer and to give you an opportunity to reinforce the lessons they have learned after camp has ended. You have entrusted your child to us this summer, but we realize that you bear the burden of responsibility to train your child up in the Lord. So, as a service to you, and to help the campers remember the spiritual lessons they have learned at camp, we hope that you will use this guide to spur discussion and conversation regarding our summer camp curriculum.

The Family Follow-Up Bible Study will help the campers and their families stay focused on the truth of God’s Word as they search and discover His Word together. Enjoy this time of family fellowship and we pray that it will continue through the year beyond this study.

With God’s help, your faithful attention to your child’s spiritual development will help to build a strong, biblically grounded generation.

You will need to download the Family Bible Study and print it out. Once completed, you will need to fill out the “completion certification” online. As an encouragement and a motivation to complete this study with your family, if completed by August 31, 2017, your child will receive a \$5 credit towards the Snack Shop in 2018 (*Campers who do not register in 2018 will NOT have this amount forwarded to the next year and cannot be redeemed as cash*). We will need a separate form filled out for each child who completes this program. When you digitally sign and fill out the form to verify completion, you are verifying that you have completed the Family Follow-Up “Listen Up” Bible Study 2017 with your child.

Sincerely in Christ,

The Staff of New Life

**REMEMBER:** In order to receive the \$5 credit toward your child’s Snack Shop account for the Summer Camp Program in 2018, the online completion certification form must be submitted by August 31, 2017

**Listen Up: Hearing the Voice of Truth**  
*(The Parables of Jesus)*

**Introduction:**

**Theme Verse: Mark 4:9** *“If any man have ears to hear, let him hear”*

**Simple Definition:** *A parable is a short creative intriguing story that illuminates a profound spiritual truth that connects the heart of God to the heart of man.*

**The parables of Jesus were:**

1. *Stories that contained profound spiritual truth.*
2. *Stories based on commonplace incidents, objects, nature or persons.*
3. *Stories that invoked questions that lead to deeper discussions.*

**The Parables of Jesus had a two-fold purpose:**

1. *The parables of Jesus **revealed truth about God’s kingdom** to people who were eager to believe and embrace the message of the gospel with child-like faith.*
2. *The parables of Jesus **hid the truth from the religious elite** who were too self-centered and too sophisticated to learn from a person like Jesus.*

**Four things to look for in the parables of Jesus:**

1. *The simple way Jesus presented truth through stories and object lessons.*
2. *The listeners came from various and differing social and religious backgrounds.*
3. *For those who had hard hearts, the parables became a stumbling block.*
4. *Those with “ears to hear” were drawn into a deeper relationship to God.*

**Read Matthew 13:10-14:** Discuss why Jesus used parables to teach.

**Read Mark 4:11-12:** Discuss how Jesus compares the faithful to the faithless.

**Read Zechariah 7:9-12:** Discuss the command of God and the response of Israel.

**H.E.A.R.** *(We will use the following format for each of the parables)*

**Happening:** What is **HAPPENING** before Jesus tells this parable?

**Explain:** How does this parable **EXPLAIN** God’s perspective?

**Apply:** How does this parable **APPLY** to the situation?

**Relevant:** Why is this parable is **RELEVANT** to us today?

**The call is to listen up and experience the powerful voice of truth!**

## **Lesson 1: The Sower** (Read Luke 8:5-18)

**The Objective of the Parable:** That the listeners will understand that the seed (Word of God) planted into soil (human heart) has the potential to be productive, regardless of one’s status in society. The growth and development of the seed depends largely on the type of soil that the seed is sown in to and how much effort is given to the preparing of the soil.

### **Happening:** *What is situation?*

1. There is large crowd gathered to hear Jesus speak at the Lake of Galilee.
2. The crowd consists of rich, religious, poor and downcast people.
3. Using a simple illustration, Jesus speaks in terms that all will understand.

### **Explanation:** *What is explained by the parable?*

1. How is the hard soil compared to a hard heart?
2. How is the rocky soil compared to a withering heart?
3. How is the thorny soil compared to choking heart?
4. How is the fertile soil compared to a faithful and fruitful heart?

### **Application:** *How does this parable apply to the situation?*

1. How do we cultivate our own hearts in order to be fruitful for God?
2. How is Satan active in the world in hindering the Word of God?
3. What is the best evidence of a person who has a proper relationship with God?

### **Relevant:** *Why is this parable important today?*

1. This parable helps us understand how weak or strong our faith is (withering faith or a growing faith, choking faith or a thriving faith).
2. All believers have the potential to be active and fruitful.
3. It is our sacred duty to cultivate our hearts in order to be active in God’s plan.

**Memory Verse: Matthew 11:15** - *He that has ears to hear, let him hear!*

**Final Thought:** This parable is a reminder that we are to be sowers of the Word of God. Success or failure does not depend on our skill as sowers but on the condition of the listener's heart. If we are faithful to the task, some of the seed will yield spiritual fruit, and we have to inspect all that we hear because what we listen to will always impact the issues of the heart.

## **Lesson 2: The Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 23-37)**

**The Objective of the Parable:** To show this religious lawyer and all who were listening that loving God means that we loves others as well. God can use anyone to accomplish great things in His kingdom, but His work is always hindered by self-righteous thinking. It was not the part about loving God that tripped up the religious lawyer but the part of loving his neighbor.

### **Happening:** *What is situation?*

1. Jesus had been speaking words of judgment against specific towns.
2. A “law expert” tested Jesus, “*Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*”
3. Jesus answered the question by using the law (Deut 6:4-5; Lev 19:18).
4. The parable is a direct response to the question “Who is my neighbor?”

### **Explanation:** *What is explained by the parable?*

1. What did the religious men do that revealed them as “bad neighbors?”
2. What did the Samaritan do that revealed that he was a “good neighbor?”
3. Considering how the Jews felt about “unclean” Samaritans, why did Jesus make him the hero of this story?

### **Application:** *How does this parable apply to the situation?*

1. Jesus often spoke about eternal life (John 3:16, 4:14, 5:24A, 11:25-26).
2. The true measure of one’s love for God is seen in the way they treat others.

### **Relevant:** *Why is this parable important today?*

1. In the world today, we need Christians to seek ways to be a “good neighbor.”
2. We need to seek ways to represent God well in order to bring others to Christ

**Memory Verse: John 10:27-** *My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow Me.*

**Final Thoughts:** This parable is meant to help us see our own sinful weakness that is revealed whenever we respond to others in need without a sense of compassion. We need to demonstrate God’s grace and mercy. Jesus Christ alone is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him. Jesus is the only source for eternal life. This parable asks the question, “Are we listening for the cries for help and aid coming from people we do not currently associate with?”

### **Lesson 3: The Wedding Feast (Luke 14:1-35)**

**The Objective of the Parable:** To show that all people have value and should be treated properly, even if they do not hold a high social status. Jesus exposes the fact that the religious leaders were motivated by profit, social status and superiority, that they used religion and lame excuses when confronted for their lack of faith. It should be noted that none of the invited guests were worthy of an invitation to this event.

**Happening:** *What is situation?*

1. Jesus was invited to have a meal on the Sabbath at the home of a Pharisee.
2. Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath and that offended the Pharisees.
3. Jesus used the opportunity to tell a story that would expose their hard hearts.

**Explanation:** *What is explained by the parable?*

1. How does this story reveal the difference between our value system and God's?
2. What were some of the excuses used in the story for not attending the feast?
3. Why did the host of the feast turn his attention to the poor and needy?

**Application:** *How does this parable apply to the situation?*

1. Jesus is showing the religious elite that they are motivated by the wrong things.
2. Refusal to accept the invitation of God results in judgment and commendation.
3. What does God expect from anyone who claims to be righteous?

**Relevant:** *Why is this parable important today?*

1. The message is the same today: God is inviting us to have a saving relationship.
2. The invitation is for the sinful to come to God and enjoy Him forever in Christ.
3. Examine our feeble excuses and remember; we worship what we value the most.

**Memory Verse: Psalm 51:8** - *“Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which you have broken may rejoice.”*

**Final Thoughts:** This parable helps me understand that God has provided one way for salvation, not through a religious system or my compliance to a set of creeds. Salvation is based solely on our rejection or acceptance of the invitation of entering into a relationship with God through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

## **Lesson 4: “The Lost” Parables (Luke 15: 1-32)**

**The Objective of the Parable:** God considers all lost sinners valuable and will go to great length to provide salvation to them, including the death of His only begotten Son. If we do not have the same value system as God has, then we will not have compassion for those who need to hear the Gospel, but will be hindered by the hardness of our hearts and love for worldly treasures.

### **Happening:** *What is situation?*

1. Jesus is speaking to an audience filled with people from all walks of life.
2. In this crowd, we would find tax collectors, Pharisees, the rich and the poor.
3. The Pharisees were offended by Jesus because he ate with sinners.
4. These parables focus on how God’s value system is different from ours.

### **Explanation:** *What is explained by the parable?*

1. How do these three parables reveal the value system of God?
2. Why would the Pharisees be offended by the son who demands his inheritance?
3. The Pharisees were offended by the father and the other son portrayal. Why?
4. How different is the value system of the Pharisees from God’s value system?

### **Application:** *How does this parable apply to the situation?*

1. God does not value our creeds, He values relationship over being religious.
2. The theme of these parables: Something of value is lost but has been found.

### **Relevant:** *Why is this parable important today?*

1. We understand God’s mercy through the depiction of the prodigal son’s father.
2. God desires devotion to Himself more than devotion to a set of creeds or rules.

**Memory Verse: Psalm 85:8-** *“I will hear what God the Lord will speak for He will speak peace to His people and His saints, but let them not turn again to folly.”*

**Final Thoughts:** These parables are meant to help us understand that we have a strong tendency to value people in a way that is far removed from the value system that God has for all. We are expected to take part in the salvation process that God desires for the world but we cannot let the blessings and benefits of God to be of more importance than the Giver of the blessings and the benefits.

## Lesson 5: **The Rich Man and Lazarus** (Luke 16:19-34)

**The Objective of the Parable:** Jesus wants the Pharisees to understand that even though they live in extreme luxury and blessing, it does not mean that they are godly men, but that their eternal destiny depends on whether or not they will place their faith in Christ. This parable illustrates vividly that there is a gap fixed between God and sinful men and only in Christ may we find salvation.

**Happening:** *What is situation?*

1. Jesus continues teaching about loving riches and not loving others.
2. Jesus is exposing the Pharisees lack of mercy and compassion.

**Explanation:** *What is explained by the parable?*

1. How did the rich man treat the poor man called Lazarus?
2. What could the rich man had done differently when he was around Lazarus?
3. What happened after both men died? To the rich man? To the poor man?
4. What do you think “the great chasm fixed” means?

**Application:** *How does this parable apply to the situation?*

1. Being rich or religious does not have any bearing on our eternal destiny.
2. If we say we love God with all our hearts, we need to value others, even the poor.
3. Seek the eternal riches that can only come from having a relationship with God.

**Relevant:** *Why is this parable important today?*

1. We cannot view the world through the eyes of the worldly.
2. When we show compassion, we are manifesting the Lord’s true nature.

**Memory Verse: Revelation 3:20-** *“Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with Him and he with Me.”*

**Final Thoughts:** This parable, as did all the others, helps us understand that God values people and desires that we treat each other with compassion, mercy and grace. The reality is that there is an eternal destiny but we have a choice. We can choose to accept the invitation of God to come into a relationship based fully on the merit of what Jesus Christ did for all of us on the cross. The question is, are we willing to love the Lord with all of our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves?

### **Final Discussion Questions:**

- Review the five parables of Jesus that we have covered in this Family Bible Study and how each of these stories helped us to understand the value system of God compared to the value system of mankind.
- How did going through each story using the acrostic H.E.A.R. benefit the understanding of the parables?
- In light of the various issues that families face today, discuss some specific ways that your family might better practice the truth discovered in your study of the following five parables?
  - The Sower (Luke 8:5-18)
  - The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:23-37)
  - The Wedding Feast (Luke 14:1-35)
  - The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:1-32)
  - The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-34)
- We hope you and your family have enjoyed the 2017 Family Follow-Up Listen Up Bible Study. Please go online and fill out the completion certification for each child by August 31, 2017 in order to receive the \$5 credit to their 2018 Summer Camp Snack Shack account.
- Here is the link. [www.newlifebiblecamp.com/ffbs.html](http://www.newlifebiblecamp.com/ffbs.html)

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